



January 30, 2026

"I've never been here before. I've never used a pantry before. I'm so ashamed, but I just don't have any food at home."



This week, I was proud to join advocates, policymakers, and other community leaders at the State House for **Food Insecurity Awareness Day** to help draw attention to the crisis of hunger in our state. I appeared as the Executive Director of the MLK Community Center (one of 137 member agencies of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank (RICFB)), as a member of the RICFB's Board of Directors, and as a Rhode Island resident. You can **[read the RICFB's 2025 status report on hunger here](#)**.

One in three Rhode Island households is food insecure. The SNAP suspension crisis showed just how fragile the safety net is for thousands of people in Newport County, and how critical MLK programs like the Food Pantry, Mobile Food Pantry, Food 2 Friends (delivery to homebound seniors and people with disabilities), and the year-round Produce to the People (weekly vegetable distribution) are. Last weekend, on the first day we opened the pantry for new Saturday hours, a woman from Newport told us:

"I've never been here before. I've never used a pantry before. I'm so ashamed, but I just don't have any food at home."

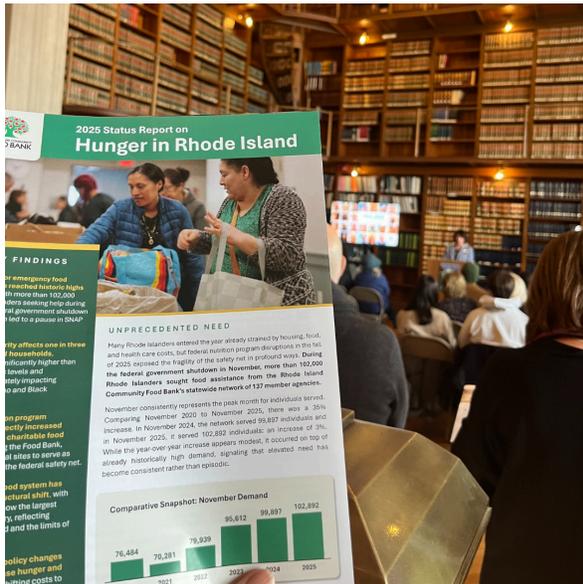
Her stress subsided into relief once she had a cart full of food to take home, and she thanked our staff and volunteers over and over again on the way out.

We're grateful to our hunger-fighting partners at the RICFB for all they do to help feed families and people in need. 44% of the food we provide comes from the RICFB (we buy 31% and 25% is donated).

And, **we're grateful to people like you!** Thank you for holding food drives in your businesses, schools, and churches. Thank you for buying extra food to donate to the MLK Center during your supermarket run. Thank you for donating from your home gardens, and thank you for making cash donations to sustain our programs.

Together, we'll keep working so everyone in our community never has to worry about having enough to eat.

Photos shown: Top, panoramic view of the Rhode Island Senate floor; bottom left, view of the State House Library with RICFB CEO Melissa Cherney speaking to assembled guests; bottom right, as I was introduced on the Senate floor.



Finding the Joy of Winter with Music Together of Newport County

We had so much fun this week with Christopher Carbone from **Music Together of Newport County**. He performed music celebrating the joys of winter for children and their parents. Then, he stayed for an extra session to play for our preschool students, who absolutely loved every second.



AARP Tax Aide services at the MLK

Stressed about doing your taxes? Don't be! We will be hosting free tax preparation services provided by the **AARP Foundation**. These services are free and open to all. Appointments will be available on **Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Center from February 6 to April 10.**

While appointments take place at the Center, they are not organized by MLK staff or volunteers. Please call **401.846.7426 x4** or email **nicole.ekhsc@gmail.com** to book your appointment.

AARP Foundation

Free Drop Off Tax Preparation Service

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers free tax preparation to anyone of any age - especially if you are 50 or older or can't afford paid tax preparation

**Fridays 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
February 6 - April 10**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center
20 Dr. Marcus Wheatland Blvd
Newport RI

APPOINTMENT REQUIRED:

401.846.7426 x4
nicole.ekhsc@gmail.com

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMUNITY CENTER



Servicio Gratis de Preparación de Impuestos

Ofrecemos ayuda gratis con la preparación de impuestos a personas de todas las edades, en especial a aquellas de 50 años o más así como a quienes no puedan pagar el costo de un servicio de preparación de impuestos

Viernes 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
6 de Febrero - 10 de Abril

 **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center**
 20 Dr. Marcus Wheatland Blvd
 Newport RI

SOLO POR CITA:

 401.846.7426 x4

 nicole.ekhsc@gmail.com




DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
COMMUNITY CENTER

Black History Month BINGO Senior Lunch & Learn

Next week at Senior Lunch & Learn, we will be playing Black History Month-themed Bingo (with prizes!) to kickstart the month. And the menu? Soul food to stay on theme! We will have BBQ chicken, mac and cheese, greens, corn bread, and peach cobbler for dessert. YUM!

Join us for a delicious meal and lots of fun next **Wednesday, February 4, from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.** See you there!



**SENIOR
& LUNCH
& LEARN**

Join us for a delicious lunch and a game of
Black History Month BINGO (with prizes)!



Wednesday, Feb. 04 @ 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
@ MLK Community Center,
20 Dr. Marcus Wheatland Blvd.,
Free and open to all in Newport County!

Lunch Menu:
BBQ Chicken, Mac 'N' Cheese, Greens,
Corn Bread, and Peach Cobbler

MLK Friends' Dinner with Tolia was DELICIOUS

This month's MLK Friends' Dinner with **Tolia Restaurant** was delicious! Not only did they sponsor, prepare, and help serve the meal, but they also cooked everything from scratch in our kitchen (see photos below)!

Check out this amazing menu:

Chickpea Stew Anatolian Style (*chickpea, lamb, onion, turkish tomato and pepper paste*);
Rice Pilaf; Cacik Sauce (*Full fat yoghurt, cucumber, mint, sumac, Aleppo pepper*); Semolina
Halva (*Turkish Semolina, butter, cinnamon, pine nuts*).

Our friends from the church of the **Restoration of the Breach Without Borders** helped volunteer as servers. We were thrilled to welcome them to the Center and we're so grateful for their help.

Thank you to our friends from Tolia for such a great meal and a wonderful evening. We hope to see them again soon!



Want to be the reason local teens have the prom of their dreams? Donate your dress through Runway 401

Can you believe that we are already thinking about prom? It's still January. But do you remember those days? Sitting at lunch in high school with your friends and planning what to wear.

Be the reason a local teen makes those same memories this year, and donate your gently worn prom dresses to Runway 401. **This program provides quality prom dresses for teens in Newport County, free of charge.** Get that dress out of the closet and donate it to one of the locations below! Thank you in advance.

If you or anyone you know could benefit from this program, stay tuned for more details on the dress distribution event to come in March.

Questions? Reach out to Jennifer Carter at 401.837.0554

2026 RUNWAY 401

“RUNWAY 401” is collecting new or gently used prom dresses to distribute to local teens free of charge

DRESS DONATION SITES:

MICHAEL HAYES
204 BELLEVUE AVE.
NEWPORT, RI 02840

**INVIDIA BEAUTY
COLLABORATIVE**
170 E MAIN RD
MIDDLETOWN, RI 02842

STALISE
105 CLOCKTOWER SQUARE
PORTSMOUTH, RI 02871

**NEWPORT MINI
STORAGE CENTER**
257 CONNELL HWY.,
NEWPORT, RI 02840

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
COMMUNITY CENTER**
20 DR. MARCUS WHEATLAND BLVD.,
NEWPORT, RI 02840

**NEWPORT ELKS
LODGE #104**
141 PELHAM ST.,
NEWPORT, RI 02840



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
COMMUNITY CENTER

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT: JENNIFER CARTER - 401.837.0554

2026 RUNWAY 401

"RUNWAY 401" está recopilando vestidos de graduación nuevos o de segunda mano para distribuir gratuitamente a adolescentes locales

LUGARES DE DONACIÓN DE VESTIDOS:

MICHAEL HAYES 204 BELLEVUE AVE. NEWPORT, RI 02840	INVIDIA BEAUTY COLLABORATIVE 170 E MAIN RD MIDDLETOWN, RI 02842	STALISE 105 CLOCKTOWER SQUARE PORTSMOUTH, RI 02871
NEWPORT MINI STORAGE CENTER 257 CONNELL HWY., NEWPORT, RI 02840	DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. COMMUNITY CENTER 20 DR. MARCUS WHEATLAND BLVD., NEWPORT, RI 02840	NEWPORT ELKS LODGE #104 141 PELHAM ST., NEWPORT, RI 02840

 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
COMMUNITY CENTER

¿PREGUNTAS? CONTACTA: JENNIFER CARTER 401.837.0554

Festival Field and Lucy's Hearth Mobile Food Pantry service rescheduled due to weather

Due to inclement weather (all this crazy snow!) we had to cancel our Mobile Food Pantry service to Festival Field and Lucy's Hearth this Tuesday. Mobile Food Pantry service to these locations is rescheduled for **Monday, February 9** as follows:

Festival Field, 90 Girard Ave, Newport RI 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Lucy's Hearth, 19 Valley Rd. Middletown RI 1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

The Mobile Food Pantry will still visit these locations on Tuesday, February 24 as regularly scheduled.

! IMPORTANT UPDATE !



MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

Due to extreme weather, we were not able to make it to Festival Field and Lucy's Hearth with the Mobile Food Pantry.

We will reschedule service to these locations as follows:

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9:

Festival Field, 90 Girard Ave, Newport RI 12 - 1 p.m.

Lucy's Hearth, 19 Valley Rd. Middletown RI 1:15 - 2:15 p.m.

**Regular service to these locations will still occur as scheduled on Tuesday, February 24*

! ACTUALIZACIÓN IMPORTANTE !



DESPENSA MÓVIL

Debido al clima extremo, no pudimos llegar a Festival Field y Lucy's Hearth con la despensa móvil de alimentos. Reprogramaremos el servicio a estas ubicaciones de la siguiente manera:

LUNES, 9 DE FEBRERO:

Festival Field, 90 Girard Ave, Newport RI 12 - 1 p.m.

Lucy's Hearth, 19 Valley Rd. Middletown RI 1:15 - 2:15 p.m.

**El servicio regular a estos lugares seguirá teniendo lugar según lo programado el martes 24 de febrero*

Beep! Beep! This week's regularly scheduled Mobile Food Pantry locations



The Mobile Food Pantry is coming your way! Here are next week's Mobile Food Pantry Locations:

Tuesday 2/03/2026:

- Hancock Estates, 345 Hancock St. Tiverton Rhode Island 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. - *Residents Only*
- Tiverton Housing Authority, 99 Hancock St. Tiverton Rhode Island 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Thursday 2/05/2026:

- Pemberton Apartments, 45 Pemberton Ave. Jamestown RI 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Bayside Village, 143 Third St. Newport RI 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

All are welcome. You do not need to reside in the neighborhood to use the Mobile Food Pantry, unless otherwise advised. Please remember to bring your reusable bags.

Download Our Monthly Calendar

Download February Calendar in

English

Descargar Calendario de Febrero

en Español



Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}
{{Organization Address}}
{{Organization Phone}}
{{Organization Website}}

{{Unsubscribe}}

Volunteer

Give



You are receiving this email because you opted in to join our email newsletter list.
We promise to never share your information with third parties, or spam you.